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CT SCAN IN MILD COVID CASES DOES MORE HARM THAN GOOD

CT scan has side effects and can end up doing more harm than good for mild Covid cases, according to AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria

EQUALS TO RADIATION OF 400 CHEST X-RAYS

"One CT scan is equivalent to 300 to 400 chest X-rays... repeated CT scans in younger age increase the risk of cancer in later life. Exposing yourself to radiation again and again may cause damage," he said. Guleria added that several blood tests for biomarkers are also not needed in mild illness if the oxygen saturation is fine, fever is not high and there are no other symptoms

MILD ILLNESS NEEDS NO MEDICATION

- Dr Guleria said CT scans should be done only when hospitalised. "If there is a doubt, one should opt for a chest X-ray," he said
- He said that clinical management guidelines are clear that people with mild illness need no medicine. One can take ivermectin or hydroxychloroquine; no need to take too many medicines | P9

93%

IF OXYGEN SATURATION GOES BELOW THIS, THE PATIENT SHOULD RUSH TO A DOCTOR

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

18+ vax push crawls; supply side crunch in various states

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

JUST three days after the rollout of the Covid vaccination programme for those in the 18-44 age group, the process is just about crawling across the country. Chart topper Gujarat has barely crossed 1 lakh cumulative vaccinations in that age group, followed by Rajasthan (75,817), Maharashtra (73,455), Haryana (54,946) and Delhi (39,799), apparently due to vaccine shortage.

Reports of acute scarcity of jabs came from various states, including Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. While Andhra has fully exhausted its stock, just 1.58 lakh doses of vaccines are available in Telangana, said Dr G S Rao, Director of Public Health.

Karnataka received five lakh vials of Covishield on Monday, but Kerala was awaiting fresh stock. As on May 2, it had just 2,67,510 doses. Maharashtra has purchased about 3 lakh doses for the 18+ age group but has no stock for the 45+ population for which the Centre is the only provider.

Meanwhile, the Centre announced it has already placed orders for 11 crore doses of Covishield and 5 crore doses of Covaxin for May through July amid concerns that no recent orders were issued. The clarification came amid Serum Institute of India (SII) CEO Adar Poonawala saying that the vaccine supply crunch will continue for at least 2-3 months. The impetus to prepare for the crisis ought to come from the Centre and not on SII, he said. P9

30 ON AI FLIGHT TO ROME TEST POSITIVE

At least 30 fliers on board Air India's Amritsar-Rome flight last Wednesday were found Covid-positve on arrival. Two of them were flight crew members. All 242 passengers on the flight are now on quarantine in Italy

Family members of the Covid-19 patients who lost their lives owing to a lack of oxygen, grieve outside the Chamarajanagar District Hospital on Monday | UDAYAKUMAR S

Zero oxygen kills 24 in Chamarajanagar

Covid gloom deepens, Congress MLA claims many more deaths, Health Minister refutes

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Chamarajanagar

AT a time when the state is grappling with a severe shortage of ICU beds and oxygen, the Chamarajanagar District Hospital became the latest Covid hotspot -- with about 24 patients dying on Sunday night due to lack of oxygen.

Family members and relatives thronged the hospital on Monday morning, grieving over the loss of their loved ones. The horror unfolded even as there were claims from some quarters that, in fact, more people had died.

The Chamarajanagar District Hospital, with 180 beds, has 55 oxygenated beds, 53 ICU beds and 24 ventilators. Although, the situation was normal till Saturday, anxiety gripped the medical staff on Sunday evening as the hospital was left with less than three dozen cylinders which would have barely lasted a few hours. The hospital authorities were expecting oxygen cylinders from neighbouring Mysuru as the liquid oxygen tanker, that was expected to arrive from Ballari, had not reached.

Around 10 pm on Sunday, some of the patients suddenly started feeling breathless due to shortage of oxygen and called up their family members and friends. A few even raised alarm and were in tears, pleading with the paramedical staff for oxygen.

The panicked health staff on duty told the attendants to shift the patients to other hospitals saying they were are helpless without oxygen supply. Soon, the situation slipped out of hand and patients started to die, creating panic in the hospital.

In the meantime, the district authorities got in touch with Mysuru MP Prathap Simha, who held a conference call with Chamarajanagar Deputy Commissioner M R Ravi and ADC Nagaraj, who is in charge of oxygen supplies, and ensured that 50 cylinders were rushed to the hospital. This was immediately followed up with 180 more cylinders. However, the tragedy had begun to unfold by then and about 24 patients had died by the time the cylinders reached.

Chamarajanagar DC M R Ravi maintained that all the patients did not die due to oxygen shortage as many had comorbidities.

CONTINUED ON: P4

CM meets oxygen manufacturers

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa held an emergency meeting with oxygen manufacturers and suppliers in Bengaluru on Monday. He assured a 'green corridor' for oxygen transportation to ensure timely supply to hospitals. P3

BJP's gen secy slams own govt over tragedy

One of the sharpest criticisms of the government over the Chamarajanagar tragedy came from BJP's national general secretary, CT Ravi. Lashing out at his own government, he said the incident "was a grave injustice and is unpardonable". P3

Health Minister should resign, says Congress

Terming the tragedy as "criminal negligence" and "murder", the Congress demanded Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar's resignation. "How much more suffering before the 'system' wakes up?" questioned Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. P3

NATIONWIDE	MAY 2	MAY 3
Fresh cases	3,92,488	3,68,147
Recoveries	3,07,865	3,00,732
Deaths	3,689	3,417

FROM ACROSS THE STATE

Psychiatrists notice PTSD symptoms among patients and doctors with prolonged effects

About six fake doctors who duped people with 'Covid Cure' arrested in Ballari

Chitradurga Police make announcements on non-availability of beds and request the public to stay safe at home

STATEWIDE	MAY 2	MAY 3
Fresh cases	37,733	44,438
Recoveries	21,149	20,901
Deaths	217	239

4 patients on ventilators die in Kalaburagi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kalaburagi

FOUR Covid-19 patients, who had comorbidities, died over a period of 24 hours due to non-availability of staff to man the ventilators at the Aland Taluk Hospital.

Aland Taluk Health Officer Dr Abhaykumar told *TNIE* that 16 Covid-19 positive patients have been undergoing treatment at the Aland Taluk Hospital since the last few days. Four of them, aged above 70, developed complications on Sunday, though they were given oxygen support, and died, he said.

Though there are seven ventilator beds in the hospital, there is no expert in General Medicine, a prime requirement to handle patients on ventilators. There is no anesthetist too in the hospital, but an anesthetist posted in a primary health centre has been drafted on deputation. On Sunday, the anesthetist was unavailable. P4

O_2-starved hospitals in Bengaluru on the brink of tragedy

RANJANI MADHAVAN & IFFATH FATHIMA @ Bengaluru

DESPITE having ample time on its hands, the State Government failed to anticipate the severity of the second wave, as cautioned by the Technical Advisory Committee in November itself. Now, Bengaluru is on the brink of experiencing a Chamarajanagar-like tragedy due to shortage of oxygen in the hospitals.

At least three hospitals in the state capital were in a a dire situation on Monday as they ran out of oxygen, throwing patients and their families into a tizzy. Medax Hospital on Sultanpalya Main Road in RT Nagar area, with 30 patients, was requesting patients' families to shift them to other hospitals due to shortage of oxygen. Another hospital, Rajarajeshwari Nagar Medical College and Hospital (RRMCH) was left with medical medical oxygen that would have lasted just three hours.

Although volunteers helped Medax Hospital and the Ramanagara Deputy Commissioner sent 20 cylinders to RRMCH at 5.30 pm, this was not sufficient. This is part of the oxygen crisis repeating itself every few days in the city. The hospital authorities wrote frantic letters to patients and their families admitted in Medax, stating, "We are running out of oxygen supply, we are unable to collect oxygen care for the patient. We have been informing since May 1st, 6pm. We will shortly run out of oxygen by May 3, 5 pm. Kindly arrange beds in different hospitals. We regret the situation."

Speaking to The New Indian Express around 2 pm on Monday, Medax Hospital medical director Dr Srihari R Shapur said they have been facing oxygen shortage since a week. The hospital staff have been running around for oxygen. Until now, they were getting it from Hosur, but the supply has reduced from there, leaving them with no option. By 4.30 pm, 15 oxygen cylinders were arranged by different organisations and Shifa Hospital on Queen's Road. P4

A crematorium in Chamarajpet has put up a 'House Full' board on its gate, in Bengaluru on Monday | SHRIRAM BN

JOURNOS ON LIST OF FRONTLINE WORKERS IN JUST A FEW STATES

Though over 150 journalists have so far succumbed to Covid-19 on the line of duty, and many others are infected, just a handful of states like Punjab, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar have designated accredited mediapersons as frontline workers for inoculation. In Kerala, the proposal to add journalists to the list was kept on hold as only a small number of vaccine doses were allotted for frontline workers. TN, too, does not treat journalists as frontline workers though Chennai Corporation let mediapersons on poll duty to take the jab.

Need national lockdown to tide over second wave: CII

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

IN what may be the first hint of India Inc favouring lockdown measures, the Confederation of Indian Industry on Monday urged the Centre to take "strongest steps, including curtailing economic activity," to save lives. "Given the current pandemic situation, safeguarding lives is of utmost priority and nationwide maximal response measure at the highest level is called for to cut the transmission links," said CII president Uday Kotak.

On the other hand, industry should voluntarily minimise the use of manpower at workplace, limiting it to critical activities required by law for the next two weeks, said Kotak, also a top banker.

"All responsible corporates should strive to protect their employees and ensure that their employee balance sheet remains healthy," his statement read.

Kotak said that industry should take cue from automobile companies such as Maruti Suzuki, MG Motor and Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India, which have halted production temporarily or advanced maintenance schedules in the interest of the safety of their employees.

Uday Kotak

Meanwhile, India's manufacturing index in April grew at the slowest pace in eight months, as output and new orders were flat due to the impact of Covid on industry.

The IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) was at 55.5 in April, almost flat against March's reading of 55.4. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

Mamata thinks big, preps to become face of Opposition in '24

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

HER image of a "street fighter" firmly established following TMC's thumping win over the BJP in the West Bengal Assembly elections, Mamata Banerjee will now try to galvanise other parties to fight against the saffron brigade in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Set to be sworn in as the chief minister of the state for the third time on Wednesday, she said her party will celebrate the landslide victory at Kolkata's famed Brigade Parade Ground, but only after the Covid-19 situation gets better. Leaders from other states will be invited to her victory parade.

"I am a street fighter. I can boost people so that we can fight against the BJP. One cannot do everything alone. I think all together, we can fight the battle for 2024. But let's fight Covid first," said Mamata on Monday.

Mamata's statement is seen as an indication that she is going to play a key role in mobilising other forces and bring them together on a common platform to challenge the mighty BJP. With an impressive performance in the Assembly elections, where her party bagged 213 seats, the West Bengal Chief Minister is going to play a role in national politics, said a TMC leader.

Mamata said many political leaders and chief ministers called and congratulated her. "But this is the first time I have not received any call from the Prime Minister. He may be busy with other affairs," said Mamata who suffered a narrow loss in Nandigram under controversial circumstances.

Mamata's announcement of inviting the leaders from other states is said to be aimed at forming an alternative force against BJP. During the elections, she wrote to several chief ministers and leaders, who are not part of the NDA, asking them to unite against the Centre's decisions which are "against the interest of the common people".

On the day of the Bengal election results, Mamata tried to build pressure on the Central government on the vaccine issue. She threatened a sit-in demonstration if the Centre doesn't give free vaccines to all the citizens of India. She is also among the opposition leaders who wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday demanding free vaccination.

"About ₹30,000 crore is required to give free vaccines to all and allotting that amount is not an issue for the Central government. BJP has spent huge money in Bengal elections. Had they used a part of it, people would have got free vaccines," Mamata said.

The Congress-Left wipeout: P14

Mamata Banerjee addressing a press meet at Kalighat in Kolkata on Monday | BIBHASH LODH

Swearing-in ceremony on Wednesday

TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee will be sworn-in as West Bengal chief minister for a third straight term on Wednesday

Can't bar media reportage on oral observation: SC to EC

KANU SARDA @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Monday said media is a powerful watchdog in democracy and cannot be stopped from reporting any court hearing.

The observation came on the Election Commission's plea challenging the Madras High Court's sharp remarks warning its officials could be hauled up for murder for not strictly enforcing Covid norms in the run up to the recent Assembly elections.

"We cannot say that media will not report the discussion that takes place in court. The discussion that takes place is in as much public interest as the final order of the court. The discussion in court is a dialogue between the Bar and the bench. Media is a very powerful watchdog in protecting the sanctity of this process," a bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud said. The bench asked the EC to take HC's observations in the right spirit.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi appearing for the EC, said, "Harsh criticism is welcome, but certain observations should not have been made." Justice Chandrachud said, "Speaking for myself, I would not have used the words of Madras High Court." The bench later reserved its order.

EXPRESS READ

ISRO case: FIR filed against 'erring' cops

NEW DELHI: The CBI has registered an FIR against Kerala police personnel in a matter of alleged framing of space scientist Nambi Narayanan in the 1994 ISRO espionage case on SC directions. The Kerala police had registered two cases in 1994, after Maldivian national Rasheeda was arrested for allegedly obtaining drawings of ISRO rocket engines to sell to Pakistan.